

VANGUARD UNIVERSITY

impact report

2024-2025

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DEAR FRIENDS OF VANGUARD UNIVERSITY,

“NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN ALL WE ASK OR IMAGINE, ACCORDING TO HIS POWER THAT IS AT WORK WITHIN US, TO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS, FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.” EPHESIANS 3:20–21

These verses from Scripture are not just a benediction. They also tell the story of Vanguard University. And as you turn the pages of this year’s *Impact Report*, you’ll encounter stories of *immeasurably more* transformation, generosity, and Spirit-empowered leadership that illustrate our mission. We are deeply committed to equipping students for lives of Christ-centered leadership and service, and this publication celebrates the ways our mission is thriving.

I continue to be humbled by the outpouring of generosity and God’s provision. Throughout the past year, we witnessed incredible

milestones, from Fred and Ruth Waugh’s historic \$35 million estate gift (the largest in our 105-year history!) to international service and learning trips, scholarships that open doors, and academic innovation across every discipline.

I invite you to read this report as a celebration of the Lord’s provision, a testimony of students transformed, and a call to continue your collaboration in this good work. Thank you for being a vital part of Vanguard’s story. Your generosity, prayers, and partnership help prepare the next generation of Christian leaders for lives of purpose and Kingdom impact.



With gratitude,

JUSTIN MCINTEE '98, MBA '09, EdD
VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT
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THE VANGUARD HONORS PROGRAM

Leadership and Impact for the Kingdom

IN THE FALL OF 2019, VANGUARD UNIVERSITY WELCOMED 20 FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS TO CAMPUS AND INTO THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED VANGUARD HONORS PROGRAM (VHP). THE PROGRAM THAT LAUNCHED THAT DAY AIMED TO SHAPE LEADERS EQUIPPED TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL IMPACT IN THE WORLD THROUGH MENTORSHIP, RIGOROUS ACADEMIC STUDIES, AND A CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY.

Since that journey began in 2019, students in the VHP have journeyed through a transformative academic experience that nurtures both intellectual growth and personal development, providing an environment where character and calling are prioritized alongside coursework, creating a holistic experience that prepares them to thrive personally and professionally.

A FOUNDATION BUILT ON PURPOSE

While a strong focus on critical thinking and academic excellence is a keystone piece to most honors programs, Vanguard's Honors Program encourages students to find and embrace their deeper purpose. For Honors student Ari Kochan '25, the program isn't just about meeting



academic standards; it's about aligning her studies with her faith and calling to serve others. "[The Honors Program] encouraged me to take pride in my academics, all while keeping my purpose of showing God's glory at the forefront," said Kochan.

Richard Park, D.Phil., assistant professor of theology and ethics and director of the Honors Program, echoed this sentiment, highlighting the importance of helping students grow in character as much as education. "It's easy for students—honors or otherwise—to get lost in the mix of all their classes and forget that they're framed around this big idea of calling, which each of us has and is meant to fulfill." By walking alongside students while they pursue their calling, honors professors can help them connect their education to their God-given purpose and explore what it means to live that out.

THE ROLE OF MENTORSHIP IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Fostering character growth in students does not happen in a classroom setting alone, and Vanguard's Honors Program is designed with this in mind. As the Honors Program prepares to add a minor to its offerings, Dr. Park highlights the mentorship aspect that will be a key part of the program. Students will be encouraged to regularly meet with two mentors—one in line with their professional journey and the other whose purpose is to be a character guide. "They're meant to meet regularly with both these mentors to shape both their character and their calling," said Park. This emphasis on mentorship creates an environment where students can grow not only in knowledge, but also in wisdom, emotional intelligence, and spiritual maturity.

The impact of these mentorship connections is evident in the experiences of Vanguard Honors students like Rachel Lopez '23. According to Lopez, "We were taught by so many skilled professors and administrators. I also gained a lot of leadership experience by being a part of the Honors Chapel Committee, which has helped me as a leader in my classes and in church as well." Lopez's testimony highlights how the Honors Program fosters leadership development and spiritual growth, equipping students to serve and lead in diverse contexts.



A COMMUNITY OF GROWTH AND SUPPORT

While the Honors Program pursues academic excellence, it also seeks to create a space where students grow together, learn from one another, and support each other in their personal and spiritual development. The program accepts up to 40 new students each year, with a total of just 120 students across all four cohorts. This size allows the program to foster a tightly knit community of professors, students, and their families. "It does feel like this wonderful village where we're all pouring into these young ones, and that in itself is irreplaceable," said Park.

LEADERSHIP AND IMPACT FOR THE KINGDOM

Perhaps one of the most powerful outcomes of the VHP is its focus on developing students who are academically successful as well as committed to making a positive impact in the world after they graduate. Intentionally designed to help students develop as leaders prepared to engage with the world in meaningful ways, driven by a sense of purpose and a desire to serve others.

"From a kingdom perspective, it's this wonderful opportunity of interacting with some very motivated and highly accomplished students in a concentrated time and place where we can pour into them as they go out and make a significant impact for the kingdom," Park said.



VANGUARD WORSHIP COLLECTIVE

Empowering Student Ministry



A DYNAMIC GROUP OF VANGUARD UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IS ON A MISSION

TO TRANSFORM THEIR CAMPUS AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH WORSHIP AND SONG. WHILE THE VANGUARD WORSHIP COLLECTIVE (VWC) BEGAN AS A TRADITIONAL CHOIR-LIKE MUSIC GROUP, IT WAS RECENTLY REVIVED AND REFRESHED, EVOLVING INTO A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF CREATORS.

“The Vanguard Worship Collective is a group of songwriters, worship leaders, content creators, and multitalented artists who are all current Vanguard University students,” explained Bodie Kuljian ’15, director of the Vanguard Worship Collective. “More than just a music ensemble, the Collective has developed into a group of young adults whose passion is to serve God, love others, and live out the calling He has placed on each of their lives to minister through music and art.”

At its core, the Vanguard Worship Collective is committed to living out a Christ-centered, spirit-empowered life of artistic ministry. It’s not just about making music—it’s about empowering students to minister to others and use their gifts and talents to glorify the Lord.

Collective member Hannah Finch ’26, Communication: Film/Visual Storytelling major, shares how her perspective on creativity has improved by being a part of the Collective. “I think when I first came to Vanguard, I viewed faith and creativity as two separate things, but [now] I think they’re deeply intertwined,” she said. “Being a part of the VWC has helped me to realize that by allowing myself to be poured into by the Collective and by the Lord, I’m able to pour out in the way that God has created me to, and that in itself is an act of faith.”



While the creative process impacts students individually, there is even more value that has come from worshipping and learning in community. Music: Concentration in Worship Leadership major, Olivia “OJ” Jimenez ’25, a member of the Collective, summed up this ethos: “We really want to be full of integrity in what we do, how we conduct ourselves on and off stage, and in every aspect of our lives. Integrity is a big piece in the group and something we strive for.”

Since integrity is a crucial part of how VWC members conduct themselves, students are expected to be active in their faith, and that starts with leading healthy spiritual practices in their personal lives. “Bodie encourages us to already be practicing our faith, to be filled up and discipled and grow in other areas,” Jimenez shared. She explains that the VWC isn’t a replacement for church. Students are expected to go to church, study Scripture, and bring those experiences with them, ready to use what they’re learning to contribute creatively.

One of the primary ways this comes to fruition is through songwriting and production. In April 2024, the Collective recorded their first album, *LIVE AT THE LIBRARY*. While it’s a pivotal moment for the group, it’s just the beginning of what VWC students hope to bring to the world through their music. “I think the vision is that, with God’s direction, it would go much farther than Vanguard and much farther than America, and really impact people for God, encouraging them to have fun with their faith,” Jimenez said.

For Vanguard students, the Worship Collective is more than just a music group. It’s a reminder that creativity flows best when it is nurtured in the context of Biblical relationships and spiritual disciplines. By using their gifts and talents to magnify the holiness and goodness of God, students are learning to use their artistic talents not just to perform but to serve with Christlike love and humility.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: OLIVIA JIMENEZ '25

Olivia “OJ” Jimenez '25, is a member of the Vanguard Worship Collective, a dynamic community of musicians living a Christ-centered, spirit-empowered life of artistic ministry. The VU alumnae from the Los Angeles neighborhood of Glassell Park discusses her journey as a Vanguard student, the Spirit's movement on campus, and what her future plans include.

What is your major?

I am a Music (Concentration in Worship Leadership) major and Theology minor.

Did you receive any scholarships?

I received the Presidential Scholarship and a music scholarship. In addition, I was nominated for and received the Undergraduate Scholar Award from the Presser Foundation. It is awarded to a senior from a university who has “achieved a high level of musical and academic excellence, demonstrated leadership and service, and contributed to an inclusive community.”

Can you give an example of seeing the Spirit move on the campus and in the VU community?

During my time at Vanguard, I've been a part of many instances in which I have sensed the movement of the Holy Spirit. One instance comes to mind: During my sophomore year, I was a part of a Bible study called Beloved. It was a weekly gathering of women focusing on community and the Word. More than a powerful worship service, it was the life-on-life discipleship that took place in it that impacted me. To me, this is true evidence of the movement of the Spirit; life change, not just momentary experiences.

What is the Vanguard Worship Collective (VWC) and what role do you play in it?

Vanguard Worship Collective is a group which seeks to create and capture the new sound of worship coming out of Vanguard University. The daily implications of the vision mean that we are regularly writing and producing music as well as leading worship in chapels and for university events. One of the larger goals of VWC is to eventually travel globally with our music.

How has the VWC contributed to your journey as a Christ-follower and as a musician?

VWC has been formative in my songwriting, music directing, and overall leadership skills. When I stepped into VWC, I had never written a song, yet I had always had a strong desire to write songs. Bodie [Bodie Kuljian '15, director of the Vanguard Worship Collective] identified me as a songwriter and leader and threw me

headlong into song writing. In one of our first sessions, we wrote the chorus to “First Love”, which is one of our top charting songs (I have the privilege of singing on it!).

In addition, before joining the Collective, I had never directed music. Again, Bodie saw a need in our team and trusted me to grow into the role of music director. As I close my third year with VWC, I find myself a confident, equipped, and growing music director. It has been special to learn how this role is not only practical musical direction but also spirit support and encouragement for the team.

And last, through my time in VWC, I've grown in leadership as in my second year I was able to be hired as the Vanguard Worship Collective assistant. In this role, I've been a part of coordinating for off-campus events and lead the class anytime Bodie is out of town. It has also trained me to become a gentler leader.

What have you been listening to lately?

“No Famine” by Oceans Music

This song is really special to me because it is from the local church I've been attending since coming to Vanguard. It is an anthem of hope and a reminder of the care and provision of the Father.

“In You” by Kingdom Culture Worship

I love this song because of the theological richness in it. It articulates with melody the beautiful and mysterious interplay and dance of the Trinity. The bridge is entirely out of Colossians 1:15-24, and it is a powerful declaration.

What are your plans or aspirations after graduation?

After graduation, I plan to do a yearlong worship internship with Kingdom Culture Church in Brisbane, Australia. I did a three-month internship with Kingdom Culture Church in 2023. During this year abroad, I hope to discern a call Australia, which I have felt since I was 13.



VANGUARD UNIVERSITY RECEIVES RECORD \$35 MILLION GIFT FROM FRED AND RUTH WAUGH

Vanguard University announced a transformative \$35 million endowment gift from the late Fred '80 and Ruth Waugh, marking the largest single financial contribution in the university's 105-year history, growing the endowment to \$52.5 million. This gift will profoundly impact generations of students and significantly bolster the university's mission to "pursue knowledge, cultivate character, deepen faith, and equip each student for a Spirit-empowered life of Christ-centered leadership and service."

Fred and Ruth, lifelong champions of faith and mentorship, were integral figures in the charismatic movement throughout the 1970s and 1980s, influencing tens of thousands. Their dedication to shepherding young believers into disciples of Christ and Spirit-led leaders was a passion of their 81 years of marriage. Even in their 90s, the Waughs continued a decades-long tradition of welcoming students into their home for fellowship, mentorship, and Godly wisdom, emblematic of their deep conviction to see God's kingdom flourish in young people.

"Fred and Ruth Waugh are an extraordinary couple who have had a front-row seat to an extraordinary period in the history of the church. But they weren't satisfied to stay in their seats. Theirs is a story of faithfulness in action," said Vanguard University President Michael J. Beals, PhD. "This \$35 million estate gift is a testament to their unwavering trust in Vanguard and their desire to see God's kingdom impact maximized through Christian higher education."

The Waughs' relationship with Vanguard University spans decades, investing in students through scholarships and special programs for nearly 50 years. The Waugh Student Center, named in their honor, was made possible by a major gift from the couple. "That generosity is beyond words," said Beals. "The size of the gift says that the impact spreads out, not just like a pebble in a pond, but like a huge boulder going into a lake and the waves go in every direction."

"The nature of an unrestricted gift to the endowment means that the Waughs trusted us to direct those funds where they will maximize Kingdom impact in the mission of the university," Beals continued. "This will, without question, change the lives and directions of students—of their families—because they were able to receive a Christian education, and a part of the cost of that education was provided for by the Waughs."

"Fred and Ruth Waugh's legacy is one of profound commitment to the Holy Spirit's guidance and a passionate resolve to support the work of the church, Christian higher education, and para-church ministries," said Beals. "Their journey exemplifies a life dedicated to seeing the Holy Spirit at work in everyone and everywhere."





“Theirs is a story of faithfulness in action. This \$35 million estate gift is a testament to their unwavering trust in Vanguard and their desire to see God’s kingdom impact maximized through Christian higher education.”

—VANGUARD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT MICHAEL J. BEALS, PhD



VANGUARD RECEIVES \$1M LILLY GRANT

IN OCTOBER 2024, VANGUARD UNIVERSITY RECEIVED A \$1 MILLION GRANT FROM THE LILLY ENDOWMENT INC. AS PART OF ITS THRIVING CONGREGATIONS INITIATIVE. THIS IS THE SECOND LILLY GRANT AWARDED TO VANGUARD, PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN FURTHERING VANGUARD'S VISION TO TRAIN AND EQUIP LEADERS FOR HISPANIC AND IMMIGRANT CONGREGATIONS WITHIN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, BOLSTER THE MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP STUDIES PROGRAM, AND SUPPORT VANGUARD'S ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CREDENTIAL PREPARATION PROGRAM.

As one of just a few Christian universities with the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation, Vanguard places a strong emphasis on equipping and strengthening leadership in the immigrant and Hispanic communities in Costa Mesa. As such, the funding directly supports efforts to further train leaders, build partnerships, and collectively learn about the challenges facing Hispanic and other immigrant congregations.

Jonathan Allbaugh, Ph.D., dean of missional effectiveness at Vanguard, is enthusiastic for how the grant furthers the mission of both the university and the Jesse Miranda Center. "The Jesse Miranda Center is something that needs to be put on the forefront of our ministry preparation," he explained, "so we can specifically look at the needs of Hispanic pastors and prepare them to lead thriving congregations." Named

after the late Dr. Jesse Miranda, who has been called the “godfather of Hispanic ministries” (*Christianity Today*), the Jesse Miranda Center continues the work of serving the Hispanic community where the academy, the church, and the community converge.

STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

In addition to bolstering the programs housed within the Jesse Miranda Center, a portion of the funding is designated to support advanced leadership training through its Master of Arts in Leadership Studies (MALS) program, now available in both Spanish and English.

The MALS program offers graduate students the opportunity to gain advanced leadership training while navigating the unique challenges of immigrant and Hispanic congregations. According to Allbaugh, there are three needs that Vanguard hopes to explore and support among Hispanic pastors and ministry leaders: “being trained for ministry, wrestling with intergenerational differences within the congregation, and the cost of educating basic pastoral ministry.”

Part of supporting the MALS program will entail funding scholarships to make it possible for a diverse range of students to access transformative theological and leadership education, empowering them to become effective and culturally competent leaders in their communities.

Additionally, the grant will support Vanguard’s Assemblies of God credential preparation program, which equips students for ministry leadership and helps them obtain the necessary credentials for serving within the Assemblies of God denomination. This program plays a vital role in equipping the next generation of church leaders, and the Lilly Grant will ensure that these students receive the training and support they need to serve effectively in their communities.

ALIGNING WITH VANGUARD’S STRATEGIC VISION

The implementation of these programs is just one way in which Vanguard is moving toward mission-aligned program development and building stronger community partnerships, all of which are pillars of the university’s

Ascend 2030 Academic Strategic Vision. The Lilly Grant will help Vanguard continue to innovate and develop relevant, responsive, and transformative educational offerings for students in both the Spanish and English programs.

“We’re putting infrastructure to our vision; I’m really proud of that,” said Allbaugh. “We’re able to bring clear action to our vision and demonstrate to outside constituents that we’re taking this responsibility seriously.”

LOOKING AHEAD

With this grant, Vanguard is poised to make a significant impact on the leadership landscape for immigrant congregations, helping to build a pipeline of talented leaders who will be a part of what God is doing in the Hispanic church. As the need for culturally competent leadership continues to grow, Vanguard is at the forefront of providing education and spiritual growth opportunities to empower the next generation of ministry leaders.

“Most importantly, it’s what God is doing, and we want to give glory to Him for making this happen,” expressed Allbaugh.

“THE JESSE MIRANDA CENTER IS SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE PUT ON THE FOREFRONT OF OUR MINISTRY PREPARATION, SO WE CAN SPECIFICALLY LOOK AT THE NEEDS OF HISPANIC PASTORS AND PREPARE THEM TO LEAD THRIVING CONGREGATIONS.”

– JONATHAN ALLBAUGH, PhD



A PATHWAY FORWARD

\$900K IN-N-OUT BURGER FOUNDATION GRANT
FUELS FOSTER YOUTH SUPPORT AT VANGUARD



VANGUARD UNIVERSITY RECEIVED A \$900,000 LEGACY GRANT FROM THE IN-N-OUT BURGER FOUNDATION (INOBF), BECOMING THE FIRST PRIVATE UNIVERSITY TO EARN THIS EXTRAORDINARY FUNDING. THIS MEANINGFUL GIFT AND PARTNERSHIP ESTABLISHED THE HEADWIND SCHOLARS, A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM PROVIDING FOSTER YOUTH WITH FINANCIAL AID, ACADEMIC RESOURCES, AND HOLISTIC SUPPORT TO ENSURE THEIR SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

“We’re immensely grateful to the In-N-Out Burger Foundation for their commitment to providing opportunity for foster youth and making the Headwind Scholars Program possible,” said Michael J. Beals, PhD, president of Vanguard University. “With this additional funding, and the support of others who are motivated to come alongside In-N-Out Burger Foundation’s generosity, we are confident in the long-term impact we can make to partner, encourage, mentor, and guide these students throughout their academic careers.”

“The In-N-Out Burger Foundation is dedicated to supporting children who have faced abuse and neglect, and believes in creating pathways for their success,” said Howard Booker, MBA ’08, executive director of INOBF. “Through our long-standing commitment to foster youth pursuing higher education, we are honored to support Vanguard University’s Headwind Scholars Program. This gift represents our vision of empowering students in a Christian college environment, enhancing resources for current and future foster care system graduates to thrive academically and beyond.”

As part of this initiative, Vanguard appointed Mark Orphan ’95 as the Headwind Scholars Director to oversee the program and develop partnerships to reach college-bound foster youth. Orphan, co-founder

of the nonprofit Finally Home, has dedicated decades to foster care, kinship support, and adoption advocacy. A VU graduate with a master’s in leadership studies and a bachelor’s in leadership, he is also a pastor and certified StratOp and LifePlan Guide.

“Our students have experienced extreme headwinds (forces out of their control) that have at the very least slowed their progress, becoming devastating in many cases,” said Orphan on the naming of the program. “We are helping our students to lift their perspective and find hope that can turn their headwinds into success instead of pushing them down.

“The transforming layers of support the Headwind Scholars Program offers our students can be the turning point that teaches them to face future challenges as opportunities to elevate their perspective and embrace the underlying personal growth potential,” Orphan continued.

A current Headwinds participant graduated in May with a bachelor’s degree in biology with a concentration in biomedical science. “The focused support from Vanguard’s Counseling Center, Disability Services, and Career Center really helped me readjust my thinking of myself, my grades, and my mental health,” said Tilda Khair ’25.



While initially struggling academically, Khair improved her academics and graduated with a GPA above 3.2. Tilde was matched with a Vanguard alum/mentor who is supporting her preparation for medical school placement exams.

Vanguard has a long-standing commitment to supporting students with foster care backgrounds. Since 2014, the Glenn S. Kraiss Memorial Scholarship has helped bridge financial gaps for these students, covering tuition, housing, and essential expenses. However, its reach has been limited. With INOBF’s generous grant, VU is now positioned to expand its infrastructure and provide sustained resources for foster youth, ensuring a lasting impact.

MORE THAN SCIENCE

How Paul Hwang Connects Kinesiology and Faith

Paul Hwang, PhD, chair of Vanguard University's kinesiology department, sees his work as an act of worship—mentoring students, deepening faith, and making science come alive. His passion for teaching and personal transformation inspires future leaders in health and fitness.

Few would draw connections between nutrition and the glorification of God, but for Hwang, these elements are deeply intertwined. As the chair of the department and associate professor of kinesiology at Vanguard University, Hwang's journey to becoming an educator is shaped by his faith, his own transformative fitness journey, and a calling to mentor students through a season of major discovery.

A JOURNEY OF FAITH AND FITNESS

Hwang's passion for kinesiology is rooted in his own experiences. His weight loss journey as a young student not only reshaped his physical health, it deepened his

faith and curiosity about the human body. "That transformation of losing weight throughout that hard summer was a way to glorify Him," Hwang shared. "It was the catalyst that got me fired up about how everything in the body works together."

From an initial interest in medicine to ultimately finding his passion in education, Hwang's journey was not a direct path. He changed majors multiple times before earning his bachelor's degree in biology at Wheaton College. There, a faculty mentor introduced him to kinesiology, sparking a lifelong pursuit of understanding exercise science. He went on to earn his master's and doctorate at Baylor University, ultimately realizing his true calling: teaching.

THE CALLING TO TEACH

Hwang described his role as an educator as a divine appointment. "Every single time I teach different topics—nutrition, sport nutrition, exercise physiology—I still experience lightbulb moments," he explained.

His enthusiasm for learning is contagious, inspiring his students to push beyond memorization and truly engage with the material intellectually and spiritually. Tyler Aanonson '24, former student and adjunct professor of chemistry at Vanguard, explained how Hwang drew intuitive connections between the functionality of the human body and God's presence: "It was never forced, but his faith was evident in every single lecture he gave," Aanonson reflected. "Seeing a man of science believe so firmly in Jesus as our Creator built my faith and demonstrated to me that faith and science are not opposing forces but go hand in hand."

A PROFESSOR WHO CARES

Beyond the classroom, Hwang is deeply invested in his students' personal and professional growth. His mentorship extends beyond office hours to ensure that every student feels supported. Aanonson recalls a





particular instance that to Hwang's character. While struggling with another class, Aanonson turned to Hwang for help; despite it not being a class he taught, he went above and beyond to help Aanonson understand the material. "With so much love and kindness, he stayed for an hour after he was supposed to leave, teaching me the concepts," Aanonson shared.

Giovanna Crivello '22, adjunct professor of kinesiology at Vanguard and a former student of Hwang's, continues to be encouraged and inspired by his mentorship. "He has guided me through my student years and into the beginnings of my career," she said, "helping me bridge the gap between faith and education—showing me how both were meant to function together."

A LEGACY OF FAITH AND EXCELLENCE

Hwang sees his role at Vanguard as more than just teaching; it is a mission field where he helps students grow intellectually, professionally, and spiritually. "Our role as educators is to nurture students, to see

their growth holistically," he said. "It's not just about their intellectual development, but also their spiritual awareness and faith journey."

A key part of that mission has been enhanced by the Freed Center for Leadership and Service, dedicated in October 2024. "I am very excited to actively witness how our new facilities can both cultivate and optimize a dynamic learning environment for all of our Kinesiology majors," Hwang shared. "The multitude of new laboratory equipment, larger classroom spaces with active learning modalities, as well as the myriad of student lounge spaces for encouraging community and collegiality amongst peers significantly elevates the educational experience for our students."

His hope for his students is that they would develop a deep appreciation for the intricate design of the human body and how it reflects God's handiwork. "I want them to explore, to think critically, and to see that what they study is not just science—it's an act of worship."

A FAMILY'S CALL TO GLOBAL MISSIONS

By John Mark Robeck '98, PhD, associate professor and director of graduate programs, School of Theology and Ministry, and Rebekah Robeck '26

During the summer between my junior and senior years of high school, I (John Mark) participated in a short-term trip to Costa Rica. It was on this trip that I received a call to the ministry. I grew up in an Assemblies of God church that emphasized global missions, and I had always been fascinated with the stories of women and men who had responded to the call to go into all the world and make disciples. This led me to apply to Southern California College (now Vanguard University), completing a Bachelor of Arts in

Religion with an emphasis in Cross-Cultural and Urban Studies, and then an MDiv. I returned to Vanguard in January 2004 as a staff member in the IT department, while also teaching in the School of Theology and Ministry while beginning work on a doctorate.

In the fall of the 2006, Vanguard approached me about leading a team of students on a summer service trip to El Salvador in partnership with ENLACE, a faith-based NGO working in the region and directed by Vanguard



"HAVING SPENT THE PAST 21 YEARS IN MINISTRY WITH VANGUARD, AND WITH ENLACE IN EL SALVADOR, I HAVE NEVER FELT A CLEARER PURPOSE THAN TO PARTICIPATE IN WHAT GOD IS ALREADY DOING THROUGH HIS CHURCH AROUND THE WORLD."

- JOHN MARK ROBECK '98, PhD



alumnus, Ron Bueno '90. My answer was simple: I was happy to lead the trip on one condition; my family needed to participate. This included Cristina Robeck, MBA '07, Rebekah who was three at the time of departure, and Caleb who had just turned one.

As soon as I stepped off the plane in El Salvador for the first time, I felt like the Lord spoke to me saying, "This will be home." We led five more trips over the next seven years, ultimately moving to El Salvador to host VU study abroad students between 2014 and 2017, after which I returned to VU to join the faculty.

These summer service trips transformed the way that our family engages in life and ministry (Rebekah). Each trip held a purpose and formed new perspectives. Despite being young when I first engaged in the short-term trips to El Salvador, these opportunities still had a long-lasting impact on my life. I learned the value of a slow-paced life and taking the time to form long-lasting relationships with others. There was a reason why my parents allowed my brother and me to spend days at a time playing with the local children, learning their names, the games that they liked to play, and their language. These values were a big part of our family's own dynamic, making sure that every night we all sat and ate dinner at the table. The experiences I had during these trips allowed me to see the beauty that God has placed in every person and place He has made, bringing to light the reality that we are all His children.

Upon our return to the United States, I had a hard time coming to terms with the move, my heart was still in El Salvador. Even more, I wanted to be a missionary again. Based on the negative experience of transitioning back to the United States and beginning junior high, I was prompted to found Let's Be Kind, a non-profit that promotes kindness on school campuses within the Newport Mesa Unified School District. In addition, in 2022 I began my freshman year at Vanguard with the desire to become a teacher. Each summer I have participated in a summer service trip offered through the Global Education and Outreach office (GEO), resulting in exposure to various places and people around the world: Tanzania in 2023, Uganda in 2024, and El Salvador in 2025. My dad



and I were able to participate in the last two summer trips together. Over the course of the past three years, I have begun to feel my own sense of calling to foreign missions.

Having spent the past 21 years in ministry with Vanguard, and with ENLACE in El Salvador, I (John Mark) have never felt a clearer purpose than to participate in what God is already doing through His church around the world. My time in the classroom is shaped by my experiences working with local church pastors who have responded to God's call to serve their communities in transformative kinds of ways. My summer service engagement in partnership with GEO and VU students is an opportunity to live out what I believe God has called me to do. The fact that I get to do this with Rebekah is a joy and privilege.



PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

Vanguard University

THE PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE IS A GROUP OF DONORS DEDICATED TO MAKING A PROFOUND IMPACT AT VANGUARD UNIVERSITY.

Members support a host of programs and departments across the university, partnering with Vanguard to advance and support our mission and vision.

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MAKE THE VANGUARD EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE FINANCIALLY ATTAINABLE



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BEALS
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DANIEL AND REBECCA
'76 BORJAS
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BILL AND JUDY DOGTEROM	CHARLES AND PAM GULBE	TYLER AND DEBBIE LARSEN	ROSS '08 AND LAURA '08 NELSON	SCOTT '90 AND PAULETTE ROBINETTE	MICK AND LOUISE UKLEJA
JOAN DON	DAVID '76 AND LISA '77 GUTEL	MELVIN AND LISA LIM	MICHAEL '68 AND MARY ELLEN NEWCOMB	RAYMOND AND JILL ROTH	RAY '74 AND CAROL UMBAGH
BRIAN AND ERIN '02 DONOVAN	DUANE HADLEY AND ROSEMARY JACKSON '84	ERIC LIMA	RONALD '69 AND THERESA '70 NIPPER	GLENN '75 AND BARBI '74 ROUSE	PATRICE VAGLICA
JILL AND FRANK DOPP	WES AND POLLY HALE	BONNIE AND JOHN LIVINGSTON	STEPHEN AND KATHY NOVARRO	ALYSIA RUIZ '11	CANDICE VALENCIA '17
KIRK AND MARILEE DORN	SARA AND LANCE HARDERSEN	BILLY AND KRISTA LONG	JACK AND HENRIETTE NYDAM	KRISTINA SACHS	OLGA VANDERLEE '06
CHRIS '04 AND LAUREN DUNKEL	RYAN AND JILL HARTWIG	AUGUSTIN AND ROSE LOPEZ	DAVID '07 AND ADELE ODDO	MATT SAKAUYE	RICHARD '66 AND JOY '67 VARNELL
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MISSION

THE MISSION OF VANGUARD UNIVERSITY IS TO PURSUE KNOWLEDGE, CULTIVATE CHARACTER, DEEPEN FAITH AND EQUIP EACH STUDENT FOR A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE OF CHRIST-CENTERED LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE.

VISION

VANGUARD UNIVERSITY WILL BE THE LEADING SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ASHER RUSS '26

Vanguard University's Student Government Association (SGA) has a new leader, and his journey to the presidency is as unique as his academic goals. Asher Russ '26, the newly elected SGA President, didn't initially plan to attend Vanguard—but a last-minute coin flip changed his course, leading him to what he now calls the best decision of his life.

Initially hesitant to attend the same school as his older sister, Russ applied to several universities and still hadn't made a decision when deadline day came. Just hours before his time was up on May first, he flipped a coin and submitted his decision to attend Vanguard. "I really feel like that was God telling me, 'This is it,'" he shared. Since then, he has embraced the community wholeheartedly, calling his time at Vanguard the most meaningful experience of his life.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

What does Russ love most about Vanguard? The community. "I've had such an amazing experience here," he explained. As SGA president, his goal is to ensure that every student at Vanguard enjoys the same transformative experience he has had. "I want every student to walk away from a Vanguard education enriched socially, spiritually, and academically," Russ expressed in his presidential campaign speech.

But community starts with connection—a feature that, according to Russ, has been significantly lacking since students returned to campus after the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this issue, his proposal includes expanding social spaces on campus, revamping the Waugh Student Center, and creating a centralized Instagram account to consolidate campus event details. "It's about making things more accessible and ensuring that students know what's happening on campus," he said.

ELEVATING STUDENT VOICES

Russ, a History and Political Science major, recognized that helping students feel heard is a major part of bringing the community together. According to Assistant Political Science Professor Eunice Kang, Ph.D., building connections through conversation is an innate part of his personality:

"[Asher] really stood out in our American Democracy class, always asking thoughtful questions and contributing to discussions without dominating the conversation. Now, in our International Relations class, he continues to demonstrate the same engagement, but with a deeper

knowledge and maturity in discussing a range of topics in a civil and thoughtful way," she said.

To foster better communication between SGA and the student body, Russ plans to expand SGA forums and make them more accessible, ensuring students have multiple platforms to express their concerns. He also intends to build a diverse presidential cabinet representing various student experiences—including athletes, commuters, and different cultural backgrounds—to provide a well-rounded perspective on student needs. "Family decisions should be made together, so I want to make sure you're all involved," he said in his campaign speech.

INSPIRED BY LEADERSHIP AND FAITH

Russ credits much of his political inspiration to Kang. Originally considering a career in teaching, he quickly pivoted to political science upon arriving at Vanguard, discovering a passion for leadership and governance.

"What makes Asher unique among his peers in terms of leadership potential and character is something that can't be taught—he's simply Asher!" shared Kang. "He inspires others to work together for the greater good of all people, all for the glory of God."

Russ' leadership philosophy is deeply rooted in his faith, and he hopes to reinforce Vanguard's identity as a Christian institution. "I want to foster a culture where we are proud of who we are as a Christian school," he said. "I want Vanguard to be a family—a place where we worship together, learn together, and grow together."

LOOKING AHEAD

As he embarks on his term as SGA President, Asher is driven by a vision of unity, engagement, and faith-centered leadership. "I truly believe that God has called Vanguard for this moment to be of refuge for His people, a place where students can grow, change, learn, and have the best time of their lives doing it," he shared.



BY THE NUMBERS

THE NUMBERS FOR THE 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR DO NOT TELL THE WHOLE STORY OF HOW DONORS CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF VANGUARD, BUT THEY GIVE A GLIMPSE INTO THE SCALE OF IMPACT SUPPORTERS HAVE ON THE STUDENTS OF VU.

2,246

STUDENTS
EDUCATED



VU IN THE 2024 US NEWS &
WORLD REPORT RANKINGS:

#14 BEST VALUES SCHOOL

#43 REGIONAL
UNIVERSITIES, WEST

#16 TOP PERFORMERS
ON SOCIAL MOBILITY

#24 BEST COLLEGES FOR VETERANS



90

FULL-TIME
FACULTY

591

TOTAL FRESHMEN AND TRANSFERS



TOTAL NUMBER OF MUSIC PERFORMANCES
AND THEATRE SHOWS

38 + 55 = 93



594

GRADUATES

1,938

TOTAL COURSES OFFERED
(IN-PERSON, ONLINE, EXTENSION SITE)
THROUGH ALL PROGRAMS
(UNDERGRAD AND GRAD)



400+

TOTAL
CHAPELS
OFFERED



22,500+

COMMUNITY
SERVICE HOURS



\$54

MILLION

VANGUARD
UNIVERSITY
ENDOWMENT



11

STUDY AND
SERVICE TRIPS

270



PACWEST SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

116+ STUDENTS ACTIVE IN STUDENT-LEADERSHIP





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